AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1–6. (CANCELED)

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image file apparatus for reading out an image file that has been recorded on a first loadable and removable recording medium and recording said image file on a second loadable and removable recording medium, comprising:

a file-number readout device for reading out a last file-number of file-numbers for image files that have been recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium;

an incrementing device for incrementing the last file-number read out by said file-number readout device; and

an image-file recording controller for changing a file name of the image file that has been read out of the first loadable and removable recording medium to the incremented file-number generated by said incrementing device and recording the read image file on the second loadable and removable recording medium without checking for duplicate file names in the second loadable and removable recording medium,

wherein the file name includes numerical characters.

8.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus according to claim **7**, further comprising a grouping device for grouping image files, which have been recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium by said image-file recording controller, according to the types of images represented by the image files.

9.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus according to claim **8**, wherein said grouping device causes a file name corresponding to each group to be recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium.

10.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image file method in an image file apparatus for reading out an image file that has been recorded on a first loadable and removable recording medium and recording said image file on a second loadable and removable recording medium, comprising the steps of:

reading out a last file-number of file-numbers for image files that have been recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium;

incrementing the read out last file-number; and

changing a file name of the image file that has been read out of the first loadable and removable recording medium to the incremented file-number and recording the read image file on the second loadable and removable recording medium without checking for duplicate file names in the second loadable and removable recording medium,

wherein the file name includes numerical characters.

11.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim **10**, further comprising the step of grouping image files which have been recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium according to the types of images represented by the image files.

12.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim **11**, further comprising the step of recording a file name corresponding to each group on the second loadable and removable recording medium.

13.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus according to claim **7**, wherein file names of the files in the second loadable and removable recording medium are such that the numerical characters of the file names of the files are consecutively numbered.

14.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The apparatus according to claim **13**, wherein the numerical characters of the file names of the <u>image </u>files are consecutively numbered regardless even when image files from a plurality of first loadable and removable recording mediums are read out and recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium.

15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus according to claim **7**, wherein the incrementing device always increments the last file-number by a predetermined amount.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus according to claim **15**, wherein the predetermined amount is 1.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim **10**, wherein file names of the files in the second loadable and removable recording medium are such that the numerical characters of the file names of the files are consecutively numbered.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim **17**, wherein the numerical characters of the file names of the image files are consecutively numbered regardless even when image files from a plurality of first loadable and removable recording mediums are read out and recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim **10**, wherein in the step of incrementing the read out last file-number includes always incrementing the last file-number by a predetermined amount.

20.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim **19**, wherein the predetermined amount is 1.

21.   (NEW) The apparatus according to claim **7**, wherein the file-number readout device is configured to read out the last-file number of the image files recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium from directly reading out the files names of the image files recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium.

22.   (NEW) The method according to claim **10**, wherein the step of reading out a last file-number of file-numbers for image files that have been recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium comprises directly reading out the files names of the image files recorded on the second loadable and removable recording medium.

23.   (NEW) The apparatus according to claim **7**, wherein the numerical characters of the file name is unique to each image file stored in the second loadable and recording medium.

24.   (NEW) The method according to claim **10**, wherein the numerical characters of the file name is unique to each image file stored in the second loadable and recording medium.